

U.S. Serial No. 09/884,638  
Attorney Docket No. 2601.102  
Preliminary Amendment

### Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### Listing of Claims:

1-20 (previously canceled)

21-25 (hereby canceled)

26-29 (previously canceled)

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30. (new) A floor tile assembly comprising:

a plurality of mutually adjacent tiles composed of a substantially resilient, plastic material and mechanically interlocked along the side and end edges thereof for adhesive-free mounting to an underlying surface,

wherein, each of said tiles comprises an elongated base of substantially solid rectangular cross-section of substantially equal thickness and having a longitudinal axis, an upwardly-facing top surface and a downwardly-facing bottom surface, and first and second substantially linear side edges forming substantially parallel borders, first and second rows of open-sided, substantially resilient, interlock structures molded on said base extending parallel to and inwardly of respective ones of said first and second edges, the interlock structures of said first row facing in opposite upward or downward respective directions from those of said second row and being comprised of a male projection and a contiguous female cavity partially formed by a sidewall portion of said male projection and shaped substantially as an inverted image of said male projection, the open side of the interlock structure adjacent the first side edge facing the bottom surface disposed to

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engage a mating inverted interlock structure of another adjacent tile from the top of said base, and a plurality of transverse stepped end surfaces, longitudinally spaced from one-another, formed on opposite ends of said base, whereby the base edges are staggered in the longitudinal direction.

31. (new) The tile assembly according to Claim 30, further comprising:  
a decorative layer adhering to said top surface of each tile  
simulating a section of a wood floor.

32. (new) The tile assembly according to Claim 30, wherein the transversely stepped end surfaces are formed by a staircase of individual steps each step having longitudinal and transverse intersecting portions to simulate transverse staggering between individual boards of a wood floor.

33. (new) The tile assembly according to Claim 32, wherein the step staircase is positionally inverted relative to a central plane through said base and perpendicular to said longitudinal axis, and wherein each step has a longitudinally disposed diagonal counterpart step on an opposite base end.

34. (new) The tile assembly according to Claim 30, further comprising:  
a plurality of top longitudinal grooves, each groove aligned with a longitudinal portion of a step and its opposite counterpart to simulate longitudinally abutting edges of boards of a wood floor.

35. (new) A method for making a composite decorative floor tile comprising:  
forming a matrix of granular polymeric material for a generally flat substrate component of the tile;  
providing a decorative lamina component of polymeric material and of a predetermined shape generally corresponding to that of the

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substrate component as the decorative component of the tile;

providing an injection molding apparatus with separate mold halves for molding the substrate component from the polymeric substrate material;

inserting the lamina component into the open mold halves prior to injection molding of the substrate component;

closing the mold halves to mold the substrate material injected therein; and

opening the mold halves to remove the molded substrate component with the lamina component adhered thereto,

whereby the composite decorative tile is formed during the injection molding of the substrate component.

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